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July 28, 1965

Ambassador Avraham Harman

Embassy of Israel

1621 - 22nd Street, N.W.

Washington 8, D. C.

Re: Dr. Martin Luther King

Dear Abe:

You will recall that, after my return from Israel in April, I wrote that I had some matters to discuss with you. We had a conference at the Israel Consulate in New York in May shortly before the annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee.

One of the matters we discussed in our conference was the suggestion that an invitation be extended to Martin Luther King to visit Israel as a guest of the Government, but under the sponsorship of the AJC. You approved of this suggestion and it was agreed that the invitation would be extended by me at the annual banquet of the AJC, where I was to make a presentation to Dr. King and would sit next to him on the dais.

At the annual banquet I extended the invitation to Dr. King. He was very much interested and said that he would like to go if possible. Later, both Ambassador Comay and you came up. I presented each of you in turn to Dr. King and each of you seconded the invitation. It was left that I would write a letter to Dr. King confirming the invitation and he would let me know if and when he could make the trip.

The letter was sent by me to Dr. King on June 2, with copies to Ambassador Comay and yourself. Under date of July 12 Dr. King replied, saying that he would be able to make a short trip to Israel in connection with the forthcoming meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Ghana, or possibly a longer trip sometime next spring, or later.

I sent you copy of Dr. King's letter on July 19, at the same time advising that the matter had been discussed by me with Messrs. Arnon and Avidar and we agreed that it would be better to have Dr. King visit Israel in connection with his trip to Ghana, even though the time he would then have available might be shorter than if the trip were made at some indefinite time in the future. We also agreed that it would be better to have him go to Israel first.

Subsequently, I received your letter of July 21 agreeing that it would not be wise to postpone Dr. King's visit, and also saying:

> *"If he is free to come on to Israel from Ghana that would be wonderful, even if it were only for a few days."*

Since receipt of your letter of July 21 I have been surprised to receive from Maximo Yagupsky, our representative in Israel, a letter bearing the same date, reading in part as follows:

> *"As you know, since my return to Israel from the States, I have been trying to come to some conclusion with the men of the Foreign Affairs Department as well as with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem regarding my suggested invitation to Dr. Martin Luther King to visit Israel, as an official guest of the government but under the sponsorship of the AJC..."*

The information Maximo received from Moshe Bitan and Shlomo Argov seems to be at variance with the discussions and correspondence which you and I have had.

It will be appreciated if you will clarify this situation for me. So far as I have been informed, the discussions with Dr. King with reference to his proposed trip to Israel, both in person and by correspondence, have been had by me. However, I have no desire to intrude and if it is the wish of your Government that you take over and deal directly with Dr. King, that, of course, will be entirely agreeable with me, provided I am informed by you to that effect.

Warmest regards.

[signature]
Irving M. Engel